THE CELESTIAL RAIL-ROAD.

Like Bunyan's pilgrim, I too was born and brought up in the City of Destruction. From early childhood I heard much said about coming wrath, and that, as Sodom and Gomorrah had been burned with fire and brimstone, so this great City would be destroyed. Still, as many of the inhabitants seemed quite unconcerned, I concluded to run my risk with them; so I chose my associates, and told them I would share their fate in spite of the warnings of Evangelist, who continually walked the streets, saying, "Up, out of this place, for the Lord will destroy it," and who, on one occasion, gave me a roll, directing me to examine it and see if what he said was not true, and bade me follow its directions how to flee to the City of Refuge. One day two persons about my own age came to me and said, "We are convinced that it is true that this city is to be burned up, that 'now is the accepted time, that now is the day of salvation,' and we are determined to leave the place immediately; will you go with us?" At the noise of their words I shook with terror,—the heavens gathered darkness, and the earth seemed to quake beneath my feet. I ran through the streets, crying, "What shall I do to be saved?" While crossing the street of Decision, Mr. Smooth-it-away, a celebrated and popular preacher in our city, hailed me, and inquired why I wept. "Oh," I replied, "the Lord is coming to execute vengeance on such as do not love him, and I, whither shall I flee from his presence?" "It is all nonsense," replied Mr. Smooth-it-away, "there

are no signs of any such calamity coming upon us. To be sure, a few wild fanatics in the city are trying to get up an excitement upon the subject, pretending that they are 'the wise' to understand the prophetic Scriptures, but everybody knows them to be monomaniacs. I hope *you* will not be so silly as to be led off by such notions." "But" said I, "do you *know* it is all a delusion? My heart trembles for fear, lest that day coming like a thief, I shall be taken as in a snare." "Know? yes, as well as any one knows. No one knows the day or the hour, and it is the height of presumption for any one to say they do. I am surprised that a person of your sense should give the subject a passing thought. To be sure, some day, perhaps in a century, perhaps thousands of years hence, this city will be destroyed; but not till after all its inhabitants have been transplanted to the Celestial City. The day when this general movement is to commence may be very near, even at the doors, and instead of your getting frightened to set off afoot and alone for the City, it is your duty to stay here and help others to get ready for the glorious change. Very soon, through the agencies of rail-roads, steamboats, and telegraphic dispatches, we can all make a rush for Mount Zion."

Cheered by such prospects, I dried my tears and walked rapidly forward, talking all the while of the means which should be used to get ready for the general removal. Just at this moment we met Mr. Reformist, carrying a bundle of books, pamphlets, and papers in his arms. "Ah," said my companion, Mr. Smooth-it-away, "just in time; here is a young man all ready to enter into any good work for the benefit of our townsmen. Somebody has tried to frighten him to run off out of the city; but I have convinced him of his folly, and now he is ready to advance the 'latter day' glory which is just upon us; give him work enough, and he will forget him-

self and his fears." "Young friend," said Mr. Reformist, "your ardent temperament doubtless requires exercise. There is a great work to be accomplished in this day of reforms, and all who engage in it will be greatly blessed."

We came now to the heart of the city, where many of its great men of business collect. With hearty good cheer they welcomed us, and inquired after our success in the "heavenly mission" through the city. Mr. Reformist replied that the prospects for converting the city were never so flattering; every opposing element was yielding, and soon, he believed, all "*en masse*" would set out for the Celestial City. Just then a bell from a street-crier arrested our attention, and this was his message, 'Hear, O ye inhabitants of the City of Destruction! The God of Daniel has unsealed the prophetic vision, the time of the end has come, knowledge is being increased, the hour of God's judgment has come, haste from this city doomed to destruction, hear the word of the Lord!" At these words my knees, like one of old, smote together, and I could scarcely stand upright. I looked this way and that, desirous to flee from my present company, who jeered and mocked the crazy heretics who come to frighten people out of their senses. I turned away, and like Christian, putting my fingers in my ears I ran through the city, crying, "Life, life, eternal life!" but as I stopped to find out the "narrow path" which led out through the "wicket gate," a policeman, named Carnal Policy, stopped me, saying, "Why such haste? Mr. Smooth-it-away, Mr. Reformist, and other interested gentlemen, sent me to say to you that if you must leave the city, they desired to warn you not to set off afoot; that since the days of Bunyan, great improvements have been made, and a fine rail-road built which would lead directly to the Celestial City; that there is a fine suspension bridge

over the Slough of Despond, and a safe tunnel through the Hill Difficulty; and that the cars are every way constructed to give rest and comfort to the poor pilgrims." At first I feared to listen to the man, but just then a stentorian voice said: "All aboard! bound for the Celestial City! Come, all who desire salvation! Get into the cars, and you are safe! we'll leave you in the land of rest!" I looked, and the speaker's eye rested on me. I could not stop, even to consult my roll, which I had carefully kept as a present from Evangelist. But on taking my seat in the cars, what was my surprise to find Mr. Smooth-it-away and Mr. Reformist my companions! "How is this?" said I, "I thought you were full of business in the city." "And so we are." said they, "but we often take a trip to the Celestial City to get some new ideas as to the best method of getting all our goods safely deposited there; and besides, we hoped to find you, and become better acquainted.

We now sped rapidly over the road and soon came to the elegant bridge over the Slough of Despond. Here we put our handkerchiefs to our mouths to prevent the unwholesome miasma from stifling us, but as the bridge heaved fearfully, I was in quite a trepidation, lest after all we should plunge headlong into the quag below.

"This place," remarked Mr. Smooth-it-away, "as you well know, is the famous Slough of Despond—a disgrace to all the neighborhood; and the greater that it might so easily be converted into firm ground."

"I have understood," said I, "that efforts have been made for that purpose from time immemorial."

"Very probably—and what effect could be anticipated from such unsubstantial stuff?" cried Mr. Smooth-it-away. "You observe this convenient bridge. We obtained a sufficient foundation for it

by throwing into the Slough some editions of books of morality, volumes of French philosophy and German rationalism, tracts, sermons, and essays of modern clergymen, extracts from Plato, Confucius, and various Hindoo sages, together with a few ingenious commentaries upon texts of Scripture; all of which, by some scientific process, have been converted into a mass like granite. The whole bog might be filled up with similar matter."

Having safely passed this abyss, I began to look around to see who were my companions. I was now delighted to see many gentlemen of deserving eminence, magistrates, politicians, and men of wealth, by whose example religion could but be greatly recommended to their meaner brethren. There were Messrs. Pliable, Worldly-wise-man, Presumption, Talkative, Love-lust, By-ends, and Hold-to-the-world, descendants of the gentlemen who lived in Bunyan's day. In the ladies' apartment, too, I rejoiced to distinguish some of those flowers of fashionable society, Miss Ornament, Miss Thoughtless, Miss Fashion, and Miss Novelize, who are so well fitted to adorn the most elevated circles of the Celestial City. There was much pleasant conversation about the news of the day, topics of business, politics, or the lighter matters of amusement; while religion, though indubitably the main thing at heart, was thrown tastefully into the background. Even an infidel would have heard little or nothing to shock his sensibility.

One great convenience of the new method of going on pilgrimage I must not forget to mention. Our enormous burthens, instead of being carried on our shoulders, as had been the custom of old, (and lost before the journey was half finished), were all snugly deposited in the baggage car; and, as I was assured, would be delivered to their respective owners at the journey's end. Another thing, likewise, the benevolent reader will be delighted

to understand. It may be remembered that there was an ancient feud between Prince Beelzebub and the keeper of the Wicket Gate, and that the adherents of the former distinguished personage were accustomed to shoot deadly arrows at honest pilgrims while knocking at the door. This dispute, much to the credit as well of the illustrious potentate above mentioned as of the worthy and enlightened directors of the rail-road, has been pacifically arranged on the principle of mutual compromise. The prince's subjects are now pretty numerously employed about the station house, some in taking care of the baggage, others in collecting fuel, feeding the engines, and such congenial occupations; and I can conscientiously affirm, that persons more attentive to their business, more willing to accommodate, or more generally agreeable to the passengers, are not to be found on any rail-road. Every good heart must surely exult at so satisfactory an arrangement of an immemorial difficulty.

"Where is Mr. Great-heart?" inquired I. "Beyond a doubt the Directors have engaged that famous old champion to be chief conductor on the rail-road?"

"Why, no;" said Mr. Smooth-it-away, with a dry cough, who, by the way, was one of the Directors of the road; "he was offered the situation of brakeman; but to tell you the truth, our friend Great-heart has grown preposterously stiff and narrow in his old age. He has so often guided pilgrims over the road on foot, that he considers it a sin to travel in any other fashion. Besides, the old fellow had entered so heartily into the ancient feud with Prince Beelzebub that he would have been perpetually at blows or ill language with some of the prince's subjects, and thus have embroiled us anew. So, on the whole we were not sorry when honest Great-heart went off to the Celestial City in

a huff, and left us at liberty to choose a more suitable and accommodating man."

At this moment the whistle of the engine announced the first stopping place. Here several of the passengers got off to straighten their limbs while the train was taking on wood and water. While promenading the side-walk in agreeable converse with Mr. Smooth-it-away, my eye for the first time got a glimpse of the engine, which, I must confess looked much more like a sort of mechanical demon, that would hurry us to the infernal regions, than a laudable contrivance for smoothing our way to the Celestial City. On its top sat a personage almost enveloped in smoke and flame, which—(not to startle the reader)—appeared to gush from his own mouth and stomach as well as from the engine's brazen abdomen. "Do my eyes deceive me?" cried I. "What on earth is that? A living creature? If so, is he own brother to the engine that he rides upon?"

"Poh, poh, you are obtuse," said Mr. Smooth-it-away, with a hearty laugh. "Don't you know Apollyon, Christian's old enemy, with whom he fought so fierce a battle in the Valley of Humiliation? He was the very fellow to manage the engine, and so we have reconciled him to the custom of going on pilgrimage, and engaged him as chief conductor."

"Bravo—bravo!" exclaimed I, with irrepressible enthusiasm. "This shows the liberality of the age. This proves, if anything can, that all musty prejudices are in a fair way to be obliterated. And how will Christian rejoice to hear of this happy transformation of his old antagonist. I promise myself great pleasure in informing him of it when we reach the Celestial City."

The passengers being again all comfortably seated, we now rattled away merrily, accomplishing a greater distance in ten minutes than Christian prob-

ably trudged over in a day. We soon passed the town of Morality, which has increased hugely since Bunyan's time. We also passed the newly settled and thriving towns of Deism, Spiritualism, and Mormontown. It was laughable while we glanced along, as it were, at the tail of a thunderbolt, to observe two dusty foot-travelers in the old pilgrim guise, with cockle shell and staff, their mystic rolls of parchment in their hands, and their intolerable burthens on their backs. The preposterous obstinacy of these honest people in persisting to groan and stumble along the difficult pathway, rather than take advantage of modern improvements, excited great mirth among our wiser brotherhood. We greeted the two pilgrims with many pleasant gibes and a roar of laughter; whereupon they gazed at us with such woeful, and absurdly compassionate visages, that our merriment grew ten-fold more obstreperous. Apollyon also entered heartily into the fun, and contrived to flirt the smoke and flame of the engine, or of his own breath into their faces, and envelop them in an atmosphere of scalding steam. These little practical jokes amused us mightily, and doubtless afforded the pilgrims the gratification of considering themselves martyrs.

At some distance from the rail-road, Mr. Smooth-it-away pointed to a large antique edifice, which, he observed, was a tavern of long standing, and had formerly been a noted stopping place for pilgrims. In Bunyan's road-book it is mentioned as the Interpreter's House.

"I have long had a curiosity to visit that old mansion," remarked I.

"It is not one of our stations, as you perceive," said my companion. "The keeper was violently opposed to the rail-road; and well he might be, as the track left his house of entertainment on one side, and thus was pretty certain to deprive him of all his reputable customers. But the foot-path still

passes his door, and the old gentleman now and then receives a call from some simple traveler, and entertains him with fare as old-fashioned as himself. We patronize "the new house opened by Mr. Creed-ulity."

Before our talk on this subject came to a conclusion, we were rushing by the place where Christian's burthen fell from his shoulders at the sight of the Cross. This served as a theme for Mr. Smooth-it-away, Mr. Live-for-the-world, Mr. Hide-sin-in-the-heart, and Mr. Scaly-conscience, and a knot of gentlemen from the town of Shun-repentance, to descant upon the inestimable advantages resulting from the *safety* of our baggage. Myself, and all the passengers, indeed, joined with great unanimity in this view of the matter; for our burthens were rich in many things esteemed precious throughout the world; and especially, we each of us possessed a great variety of favorite habits, which we trusted would not be out of fashion, even in the polite circles of the Celestial City. It would have been a sad spectacle to see such an assortment of valuable articles tumbling into the sepulcher. I should not omit to mention, also, that out of respect to the more refined feelings of a class of persons who patronize the rail-road very liberally, the company have caused a grove of trees to be planted between the road and the Cross, so as to conceal the latter object entirely from view, and thus benevolently prevent any unpleasant associations that might arise from the sight. While pleasantly conversing on the favorable circumstances of our position as compared with those of past pilgrims, and of narrow-minded ones of the present day, we soon found ourselves at the foot of the Hill Difficulty. Through the very heart of this rocky mountain a tunnel has been constructed of most admirable architecture, with a lofty arch and a spacious double track; so that unless the earth and

rocks should chance to crumble down, it will remain an eternal monument of the builder's skill and enterprise. It is a great though incidental advantage that the materials from the heart of the Hill Difficulty have been employed in filling up the Valley of Humiliation,—at least that part of it over which the road passes,—thus obviating the necessity of descending into that disagreeable and unwholesome hollow.

"This is a wonderful improvement, indeed," said I. "Yet I should have been glad of an opportunity to visit the Palace Beautiful, and be introduced to the charming young ladies,—Miss Prudence, Miss Piety, Miss Charity, and the rest,—who have the kindness to entertain pilgrims there."

"Young ladies!" cried Mr. Smooth-it-away, as soon as he could speak for laughing. "And charming young ladies! Why, my dear fellow, they are old maids, every soul of them,—prim, dry, starched, and angular,—and not one of them, I will venture to say, has altered so much as the fashion of her gown, since the days of Christian's pilgrimage."

"Ah, well," said I, much comforted, "then I can very well dispense with their acquaintance."

The respectable Apollyon was now putting on the steam at a prodigious rate, anxious perhaps to get rid of the unpleasant reminiscences connected with the spot where he had so disastrously encountered Christian. Consulting Mr. Bunyan's road-book, I perceived that we must now be within a few miles of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, into which doleful region, at our present speed, we should plunge much sooner than seemed at all desirable. In truth, I expected nothing better than to find myself in the ditch on one side, or the quag on the other. But on communicating my apprehensions to Mr. Smooth-it-away, he assured me that the difficulties of this passage, even in its worst

condition, had been vastly exaggerated, and that in its present state of improvement, I might consider myself as safe as on any rail-road in Christendom.

Even while we were speaking, the train shot into the entrance of this dreaded Valley. Though I plead guilty to some foolish palpitations of the heart during our headlong rush over the causeway here constructed, yet it were unjust to withhold the highest encomiums on the boldness of its original conception, and also the ingenuity of those who executed it. It was gratifying, likewise, to observe how much care had been taken to dispel the everlasting gloom, and supply the defect of cheerful sunshine, not a ray of which has ever penetrated among these awful shadows. For this purpose the inflammable gas, which exudes plentifully from the soil, is collected by means of pipes, and thence communicated to a quadruple row of lamps along the whole extent of the passage. Thus a radiance has been created, even out of the fiery and sulphurous curse that rests forever upon the Valley; a radiance hurtful, however, to the eyes, and somewhat bewildering, as I discovered by the changes which it wrought in the visages of my companions. In this respect, as compared with natural daylight, there is the same difference as between truth and falsehood; but if the reader has ever traveled through the dark Valley, he will have learned to be thankful for any light that he could get; if not from the sky above, then from the blasted soil beneath. Such was the red brilliancy of these lamps, that they appeared to build walls of fire on both sides of the track, between which we held our course at lightning speed, while a reverberating thunder filled the Valley with its echoes. Had the engine run off the track (a catastrophe, it is whispered, by no means unprecedented), the bottomless pit, if there be any such place, would undoubtedly have received us. Just as

some dismal fooleries of this kind had made my heart quake, there came a tremendous shriek careering along the Valley, as if a thousand devils had burst their lungs to utter it, but which proved to be merely the whistling of the engine on arriving at a stopping-place.

The spot where we had now paused is the same that our friend Bunyan—a truthful man, but infected with many fantastic notions—has designated, in terms plainer than I like to repeat, as the mouth of the infernal region. This, however, must be a mistake, inasmuch as Mr. Smooth-it-away, while we remained in the smoky and lurid cavern, took occasion to prove that Tophet has not even a metaphorical existence. The place, he assured us, is no other than the crater of a half-extinct volcano, in which the directors had caused forges to be set up for the manufacture of rail-road iron. Here also is obtained a plentiful supply of fuel for the use of the engines. Whoever had gazed into the dismal obscurity of the broad cavern mouth, whence, ever and anon darted huge tongues of dusky flame, and had seen the strange half-shaped monsters, and visions of faces horribly grotesque into which the smoke seemed to wreathe itself, and had heard the awful murmurs, and shrieks, and deep shuddering whispers of the blast, sometimes forming itself into words almost articulate,—would have seized upon Mr. Smooth-it-away's comfortable explanation as greedily as we did. The inhabitants of the cavern, moreover, were unlovely personages, dark, smoke-begrimmed, generally deformed, with misshapen feet, and a glow of dusky redness in their eyes, as if their hearts had caught fire, and were blazing out of the upper windows. It struck me as a peculiarity that the laborers at the forge, and those who brought fuel to the engine, when they began to draw short breath, positively emitted smoke from their mouth and nostrils.

Among the idlers about the train, most of whom were puffing cigars which they had lighted at the flame of the crater, I was perplexed to notice several who, to my certain knowledge, had heretofore set forth by rail-road to the Celestial City. They looked dark, wild, and smoky, with a singular resemblance indeed, to the native inhabitants, like whom, also, they had a disagreeable propensity to ill-natured gibes and sneers, the habit of which had wrought a settled contortion on their visages. Having been on speaking terms with one of them,—an indolent, good-for-nothing fellow, who went by the name of Take-it-easy,—I called to him and inquired what was his business there.

"Did you not start," said I, "for the Celestial City?"

"That's a fact," said Mr. Take-it-easy, carelessly puffing some smoke into my eyes. "But I heard such bad accounts of it that I never took pains to climb the hill on which the city stands. No business doing, no fun going on, nothing to drink, and no smoking allowed, and a thrumming of church music from morning till night. I would not stay in such a place if they offered me house-room and living free."

"But, my good Mr. Take-it-easy," cried I, "why take up your residence here, of all places in the world?"

"Oh," said the loafer with a grin, "I meet with plenty of old acquaintances, and altogether the place suits me. I hope to see you back again, some day soon. A pleasant journey to you."

While he was speaking, the bell of the engine rang, and we dashed away after dropping a few passengers, but receiving no new ones. Rattling onward through the valley, we were dazzled with the fiercely gleaming gas lamps, as before; but sometimes, in the dark, of intense brightness, grim faces that bore the aspect and expression of indi-

vidual sins or evil passions, seemed to thrust themselves through the vail of light, glaring upon us, and stretching forth a great dusky hand, as if to impede our progress. I almost thought that they were my own sins that appalled me there. These were freaks of imagination—nothing more, certainly—mere delusions, which I ought to be heartily ashamed of; but all through the dark Valley I was tormented, and pestered, and dolefully bewildered, with the same kind of waking dreams. The mephitic gases of that region intoxicate the brain. As the light of natural day, however, began to struggle with the glow of the lanterns, these vain imaginations lost their vividness, and finally vanished with the first ray of sunshine that greeted our escape from the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Ere we had gone a mile beyond it, I could well nigh have taken my oath that this whole gloomy passage was a dream.

At the end of the Valley, as John Bunyan mentions, is a cavern, where in his days, dwelt two giants, Pope and Pagan, vile old troglodytes, who had strown the ground about their residence with the bones of slaughtered pilgrims. Pagan still lives there; but his strength has failed him very much, from old age. Pope no longer slaughters pilgrims as formerly; but now occupies a spacious building near by, where, with great splendor, beautiful paintings, and exquisite music, he entices pilgrims to tarry with him, and then mingles some narcotic drug with their food, which they unwittingly eat, and soon are sleeping the sleep of death. He is at present re-adorning his edifice, and sending forth his servants, far and near, to allure unwary pilgrims.

A few miles further on, we passed the castle of another giant, who has moved there since Bunyan's time, and makes it his business to seize upon honest travelers, and fat them for his table with

plentiful meals of smoke, mist, moonshine, raw potatoes, and saw-dust. He is a German by birth, and is called Giant Transcendentalist; but as to his form, his features, his substance, and his nature generally, it is the chief peculiarity of this huge miscreant, that neither he for himself, nor any body for him, has ever been able to describe them. As we rushed by the cavern's mouth, we caught a hasty glimpse of him, looking somewhat like an ill-proportioned-figure, but considerably more like a heap of fog and duskiness. He shouted after us, but in so strange a phraseology, that we knew not what he meant, nor whether to be encouraged or affrighted.

It was late in the day when the train thundered into the ancient city of Vanity, where Vanity Fair is still at the height of prosperity, and exhibits an epitome of whatever is brilliant, gay, and fascinating, beneath the sun. As I purposed to make a considerable stay here, it gratified me to learn that there was no longer the want of harmony between the townspeople and pilgrims, which impelled the former to such lamentably mistaken measures as the persecution of Christian, and the fiery martyrdom of Faithful. On the contrary, as the new railroad brings with it great trade, and a constant influx of strangers, the lord of Vanity Fair is its chief patron, and the capitalists of the city are among the largest stockholders. Many passengers stop to take their pleasure, or to make their profit, in the Fair, instead of going onward to the Celestial City. Indeed, such are the charms of the place, that people often affirm it to be the true and only Heaven; stoutly contending that there is no other; that those who seek further, are mere dreamers; and that, if the fabled brightness of the Celestial City lay but a bare mile beyond the gates of Vanity, they would not go thither. Without subscribing to these, perhaps exaggerated encomiums, I can truly say that

my abode in the city was mainly agreeable, and my intercourse with the inhabitants productive of much amusement and instruction.

Being naturally of a serious turn, my attention was directed to the solid advantages derivable from a residence here, rather than to the effervescent pleasures, which are the grand object with too many visitants. The Christian reader, if he has had no accounts of the city later than Bunyan's time, will be surprised to hear that almost every street has its church, and that the reverend clergy are nowhere held in higher respect than at Vanity Fair. And well do they deserve such honorable estimation; for the maxims of wisdom and virtue which fall from their lips, come from as deep a spiritual source, and tend to as lofty a religious aim, as those of the sagest philosophers of old. In justification of this high praise, I need only mention the names of the Rev. Prof. Shallow-deep; the Rev. Mr. Stumble-at-truth; that fine old clerical character, the Rev. Mr. This-to-day, who expects shortly to resign his pulpit to the Rev. Mr. That-to-morrow; together with Mr. Bewilderment; the Rev. Mr. Clog-the-Spirit; and, last and greatest, the Rev. Dr. Wind-of-doctrine. The labors of these eminent divines are aided by those of innumerable lecturers, who diffuse such a richness and variety in all subjects of human or celestial science, that any man may acquire an omnigenous erudition without the trouble of even learning to read. Thus literature is etherealized by assuming for its medium the human voice; and knowledge, depositing all its heavier particles, becomes exhaled into a sound, which forthwith steals into the ever-open ear of the community.

These ingenious methods constitute a sort of machinery by which thought and study are done to every person's hand without his putting himself to the slightest inconvenience in the matter. There

is another species of machine for the wholesale manufacture of individual morality. This excellent result is effected by societies for all manner of virtuous purposes; with which a man has merely to connect himself, throwing, as it were, his quota of virtue into the common stock; and the president and directors will take care that the aggregate amount be well applied. All these, and other wonderful improvements in ethics, religion, and literature, being made plain to my comprehension by the ingenious Mr. Smooth-it-away, inspired me with a vast admiration of Vanity Fair.

It would fill a volume, in this age of pamphlets, were I to record all my observations in this great capital of human business and pleasure. There was an unlimited range of society,—the powerful, the wise, the witty and the famous in every walk of life,—princes, presidents, poets, generals, artists, actors, and philanthropists, all making their own market at the Fair, and deeming no price too exorbitant for such commodities as met their fancy. It was well worth one's while, even if he had no idea of buying or selling, to loiter through the bazaars, and observe the various sorts of traffic that were going forward. Some of the purchasers, I thought, made very foolish bargains. For instance, a young man having inherited a splendid fortune, laid out a considerable portion of it in the purchase of diseases, and finally spent all the rest for a heavy lot of repentance and a suit of rags. There was a sort of stock or scrip, called Conscience, which seemed to be in great demand, and would purchase almost anything. Indeed, few rich commodities were to be obtained without paying a heavy sum in this particular stock, as a man's business was seldom lucrative, unless he knew precisely when and how to throw his hoard of Conscience into the market. Yet as this stock was the only thing of

permanent value, whoever parted with it was sure to find himself a loser, in the long run. Thousands sold their happiness for a whim. Gilded chains were in great demand, and purchased with almost any sacrifice. I observed, moreover, there were innumerable messes of pottage, piping hot, for such as chose to buy them with their birthrights. A few articles, however, could not be found genuine at Vanity Fair. If a customer wished to renew his stock of youth, the dealers offered him a set of false teeth and an auburn wig; if he demanded peace of mind, they recommended lively music, or opium, or the brandy bottle, or peradventure a draught of that most powerful sedative,—Spiritualism.

Tracts of land and golden mansions, situate in the Celestial City, were often exchanged, at very disadvantageous rates, for a few years' lease of small, dismal, inconvenient tenements in Vanity Fair.

While laying over here, it was my privilege to listen to a course of eloquent lectures delivered in the Rev. Mr. Bewilderment's church, by several of the most eminent divines of the place. Unlike the discourses I had been accustomed to hear, they were full of *new* ideas; indeed, the improvements in theology are as great as those in any other science. The first lecture was by the pastor of the church himself, in which he proved that the Bible, although truly called a Revelation, is nevertheless an unrevealed revelation to man; and is designed mainly for the saints after they shall have been gathered home to glory.

The second lecture was by the Rev. Bishop Facing-both-ways, who, after exhibiting the most satisfactory evidence that the true succession of the apostles had descended unbroken to him, turned to the prophecies and showed that they can never be understood till after accomplishment; and that the dec-

laration of Christ, "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the door," was a *lapsus linguæ*, owing to the fact that he was speaking extemporaneously. The Bishop took occasion from this to descant most eloquently upon the impropriety of preaching discourses without first writing them.

The Rev. Dr. No-law delivered the third lecture, and took for his subject the fourth commandment. I was mightily pleased with the logic of this erudite gentleman, having been previously troubled on this question by a class of evangelists in my own town of Destruction, who taught that "till heaven and earth passed, one jot or tittle of the law should in no wise fail." He treated the subject under eight different heads, conclusively proving, 1. That the ancient Sabbath had been changed to the first day of the week. 2. That Sunday is now the true seventh day, and should be observed. 3. That we cannot tell which day of the week the seventh day is. 4. That we are only required to keep a seventh part of time. 5. That the command to keep the seventh day had been abolished. 6. That somewhere this side of creation, time has been lost, so that it is now impossible to identify the true seventh day. 7. That those who keep the fourth-commandment Sabbath are fallen from grace; and 8. That every one should be fully persuaded in his own mind whether to keep the Sabbath or not. There was such a depth of argument in this discourse, and such a halo of light superinduced, that none but shallow-brained or fanatical persons will ever have the courage to question these positions again.

The fourth lecture was by old Father Any-thing, on the resurrection, showing that each man receives a resurrection body when he dies, and that there is to be no general resurrection.

The fifth was on the Jews, by Rev. Mr. Two-

tongues. He showed that while Gentile Christians are God's people, the Jews, although still unbelieving, are his *peculiar* people, and that the partition wall was not so completely broken down by Christ as to place the Gentile on a perfect footing with the Jew,—only to make salvation possible for him. Paul's words, he said, were to be understood with great limitation.

Rev. Professor Shallow-deep took for the subject of the sixth lecture the 2300 days of Daniel. He contended that they were literal days; because history proves that the rise and fall of the several great kingdoms did actually occur within so many literal days. He was sorry to say that the historical records are not now extant, having been destroyed by Omar, when he burnt the Alexandrian library.

The Rev. Dr. Neologian, in the seventh lecture, proved that the chronology of the Bible is uninspired; that God has designedly and wisely hidden from us the chronology of the world, and that the prophetic periods, and many portions of Scripture making mention of time, are mere expletives, as every student skillful in biblical exegesis will allow.

The last lecture was by Rev. Mr. Stumble-at-truth, who showed that inasmuch as the world is yet in its infancy, nearly as much so as at the time of the flood, God, as a God of love, cannot destroy it now, and he should think not for at least three hundred and sixty thousand years to come.

Day after day, as I walked the streets of Vanity, my manners and deportment became more and more like those of the inhabitants. The place began to seem like home; the idea of pursuing my travels to the Celestial City was almost obliterated from my mind. I was reminded of it, however, by the sight of the same pair of simple pilgrims at whom we laughed so heartily, when the conductor puffed smoke and steam into their faces, at the commencement of our journey. There they stood amid

the densest bustle of Vanity,—the dealers offering them their purple, and fine linen, and jewels; the men of wit and humor gibing at them; the ladies ogling them askance; while the benevolent Mr. Smooth-it-away whispered some of his wisdom at their elbows, and pointed to a newly-erected temple,—but there were these worthy simpletons, making the scene look wild and monstrous, merely by their sturdy repudiation of all part in its business or pleasures. They did not seem to recognize me, as being the same person they had seen in the city of Destruction; and I did not introduce myself, from fear of being laughed at.

One of them, however—his name was Stick-to-the-right—perceived in my face, I suppose, a species of sympathy and almost admiration, which I could not help feeling for this pragmatic couple.

"Sir," inquired he, with a sad, yet mild and kindly voice, "do you call yourself a pilgrim?"

"Yes," I replied, "my right to that appellation is indubitable; I am merely a sojourner here in Vanity Fair, being bound to the Celestial City by the new rail-road."

"Alas, friend," rejoined Mr. Stick-to-the-right, "I do assure you, and beseech you to receive the truth of my words, that whole concern is a bubble. You may travel on it all your lifetime, were you to live thousands of years, and never get beyond the limits of Vanity Fair! Yea; though you should deem yourself entering the gates of the Blessed City, it will be nothing but a miserable delusion. Are we not told to put on the whole armor of God, to carry the shield of faith, and to have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel? Surely there can be no need of being thus equipped, if we can travel in a railroad car. Therefore that cannot be the right way."

"The Lord of the Celestial City," began the other pilgrim, whose name was Mr. Go-the-old-way,

"has refused, and will ever refuse, to grant an act of incorporation for this rail-road; and unless that be obtained, no passenger can ever hope to enter his dominions. Wherefore, every man who buys a ticket, must lay his account with losing the purchase-money, which is the value of his own soul."

"Poh, nonsense!" said Mr. Smooth-it-away, taking my arm and leading me off, "these fellows are fanatics, and ought to be indicted for a libel. If the law stood as it once did in Vanity Fair, we should see them grinning through the iron bars of the prison window."

This incident made a considerable impression on my mind, and contributed with other circumstances to indispose me to a permanent residence in the city of Vanity; although, of course, I was not simple enough to give up my original plan of gliding along easily and commodiously by rail-road. Still I grew anxious to be gone. There was one strange thing that troubled me; amid the occupations or amusements of the Fair, nothing was more common than for a person, whether at a feast, theater, or church, or trafficking for wealth and honors, or whatever he might be doing, and however unseasonable the interruption, suddenly to vanish like a soap-bubble, and be never more seen of his fellows: and so accustomed were the latter to such little accidents, that they went on with their business as quietly as if nothing had happened. But it was otherwise with me.

One day, moreover, I was met in the street by my old counsellor, Evangelist, who accosted me thus: "Well, friend, are you pursuing the pilgrimage still, or have you taken up your abode here?" I told him that I came hither by the rail-road, and expected soon to leave by the same mode of conveyance. "Were such," he said, "the directions given in the parchment roll I handed you?" I told him I had not consulted the roll on this point; but

had carefully locked it up for safe keeping, intending to read and examine it carefully after I reached the Celestial City, where I should be able to study it without distraction. "Then," said he, "it will be of no use to you; for it contains directions how you are to travel thither, what to do on the road, and what not to do, so that the King shall give you a welcome within the City. Depend upon it, if you do not follow those directions, the gates will remain closed against you forever, and you will be with the 'unbelieving and the abominable,' and with them 'shall have part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.'"

Perceiving that I began to tremble, he handed me a slip of paper containing a few extracts from the roll, which he urged me to write upon my heart. He also urged me to commence examining the roll immediately, and to examine it carefully every day until I might reach the very gate of the city. Such, he said, had been the course pursued by Humble-mind, Love-truth, Deny-self, and a host of others who had already been admitted within the gate; and only on such conditions could he promise me an entrance; and, so saying, he left me.

The writing on the paper was as follows:

"By the deeds of the law, shall no flesh living be justified. *He* was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement for *our* peace was upon *him;* and with *his* stripes *we* are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath *laid on him the iniquity of us all.* He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. Unto them that *look for him* shall he appear, the *second time*, without sin unto salvation. If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne."

I read the whole, and read it over again, and again, and was thinking how simple and beautiful, how safe for man, and every way worthy of God, is the plan of salvation, and was just about to prostrate myself and say, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief, when Messrs. Pride and Smooth-it-away accosted me in haste, saying, "The car in which you came from the city of Destruction will leave this station in a few hours, and if you wish to resume the journey at this time, we shall be very happy in having your company." Without stopping to think, I thanked them, and said I also should be gratified in having them for fellow-passengers. Accordingly, laying aside the manuscript for the time being, I went to the station-house at the hour appointed, and took my seat in the car, where were Messrs. Pride and Smooth-it-away, and others of our old fellow-passengers, besides Messrs. Blindman, No-good, Live-loose, Heady, High-mind, Love-self, Boasting, Hate-light, Heedless, Formalist, Evil-thoughts, Vain-confidence, Money-love, Prejudice, Shame, Unbelief, and several others whose names it would be tedious to mention, all of whom had hitherto been residents of the town of Vanity.

During our long sojourn the car had been repainted, carpeted anew, and ornamented with splendid engravings hung all around the inside, for the amusement of the passengers. Among these were some excellent caricatures; one, of the two pilgrims we had passed, as trudging along with such inexpressibly woe-be-gone countenances, and dressed off altogether in so old-fashioned and ridiculous a way, that none of us could help laughing at it. The man who painted this was indisputably a man of genius. But the best caricature of all was one representing the burning of the world. The subject was almost too solemn; but, as a caricature, the picture was inimitable.

In a convenient part of the car, also, a table had

been placed loaded with entertaining works, among which I noticed Shakespeare, Scott's novels, a splendid edition of all the writings of Boz, Andrew Jackson Davis' works, Hugh Miller on Geology, Swedenborg on the Last Judgment, the complete works of Lord Byron and of Thomas Moore, handsomely embellished with engravings, files of papers and magazines filled with all kinds of amusing and wonderful stories, some designed for Sunday and others for week-day reading.

At a short distance beyond the suburbs of Vanity, we passed the ancient silver mine, of which Demas was the first discoverer, and which is now wrought to great advantage, supplying nearly all the coined currency of the world. A little further onward was the spot where Lot's wife had stood for ages, under the semblance of a pillar of salt. Curious travelers have carried it away piece-meal. Had all regrets been punished as rigorously as this poor dame's were, my yearning for the relinquished delights of Vanity Fair might have produced a similar change in my own corporeal substance, and left me a warning to future pilgrims.

The next remarkable object was a large edifice, constructed of moss-grown stone,—the Castle of the redoubted giant Despair; and immediately adjoining it was another castle built in a modern and airy style of architecture. The engine came to a pause in its vicinity with the usual tremendous shriek.

"This," observed Mr. Smooth-it-away, is the castle of Mr. Flimsy-faith, who keeps an excellent house of entertainment here. It is one of our stopping-places."

"It seems but slightly put together," remarked I, looking at the frail yet ponderous walls. "I do not envy Mr. Flimsy-faith his habitation. Some day it will thunder down upon the heads of the occupants."

"We shall escape, at all events," said Mr.

Smooth-it-away; for they are putting on the steam again."

The road now plunged into a gorge of the Delectable Mountains, and traversed the field where, in former ages, the blind men wandered among the tombs. One of these ancient tomb-stones had been thrust across the track, by some malicious person, and gave the train of cars a terrible jolt. Far up the rugged side of a mountain, I perceived a rusty iron door, half overgrown with bushes and creeping plants, but with smoke issuing from its crevices.

"Is that," inquired I, "the very door in the hill-side, which the shepherds assured Christian was a by-way to Hell?"

"That was a joke on the part of the shepherds," said Mr. Smooth-it-away, with a smile. "It is neither more nor less than the door of a cavern, which they use as a smoke-house, for the preparation of mutton hams."

My recollections of the journey are now, for a little space, dim and confused, inasmuch as a singular drowsiness here came over me, owing to the fact that we were passing over the enchanted ground, the air of which encourages a disposition to sleep.

I awoke, however, as soon as we crossed the borders of the pleasant land of Beulah. All the passengers were rubbing their eyes, comparing watches, and congratulating one another on the prospect of arriving so seasonably at the journey's end. The sweet breezes of this happy clime came refreshingly to our nostrils; we beheld the glimmering gush of silver fountains, overhung by trees of beautiful foliage and delicious fruit, which were propagated by grafts from the celestial gardens. Once, as we dashed on like a hurricane, there was a flutter of wings, and the bright appearance of an angel in the air, speeding forth on some heavenly mission. The engine now announced the close vicinity of the final

Station House, by one last and horrible scream, in which there seemed to be distinguishable every kind of wailing and woe, and bitter fierceness and wrath, all mixed up with the wild laughter of a devil or a mad-man. Throughout our journey, at every stopping-place, Apollyon had exercised his ingenuity in screwing the most abominable sounds out of the whistle of the steam-engine; but, in this closing effort he outdid himself, and created an infernal uproar, which, besides disturbing the peaceful inhabitants of Beulah, must have sent its discord even through the celestial gates.

While the horrid clamor was still ringing in our ears, we heard an exulting strain, as if a thousand instruments of music, with hight, and depth, and sweetness, in their tones, at once tender and triumphant, were struck in unison, to greet the approach of some illustrious hero, who had fought the good fight and won a glorious victory, and was come to lay aside his battered arms forever. Looking to ascertain what might be the occasion of this glad harmony, I perceived on alighting from the cars, that a multitude of shining ones had assembled on the other side of the river, to welcome two poor pilgrims, who were just emerging from its depths. They were the same whom Apollyon and ourselves had persecuted with taunts and gibes, and scalding steam, at the commencement of our journey—the same whose unworldly aspect and impressive words had stirred my conscience, amid the wild revellers of Vanity Fair.

"How amazingly well those men have got on!" cried I to Mr. Smooth-it-away. "I wish we were secure of as good a reception."

"Never fear—never fear!" answered my friend. "Come, make haste; the ferry-boat will be off directly, and in three minutes you will be on the other side of the river. No doubt you will find coaches to carry you up to the city gates."

A steam ferry-boat, the last improvement on this important route, lay at the river-side, puffing, snorting, and emitting all those other disagreeable utterances, which betoken the departure to be immediate. I hurried on board with the rest of the passengers, most of whom were in great perturbation; some bawling out for their baggage; some tearing their hair, and exclaiming that the boat would explode or sink; some already pale with the heaving of the stream; some gazing affrighted at the ugly aspect of the steersman; and some still dizzy with the slumberous influences of the Enchanted Ground. Looking back to the shore, I was amazed to discern Mr. Smooth-it-away waving his hand in token of farewell!"

"Don't you go over to the Celestial City?" exclaimed I.

"Oh, no!" answered he, with a queer smile, and that same disagreeable contortion of visage which I had remarked in the inhabitants of the Dark Valley. "Oh, no! I have come thus far only for the sake of your pleasant company. Good-bye! We shall meet again."

And then did my excellent friend, Mr. Smooth-it-away, laugh outright; in the midst of which cachination, a smoke wreath issued from his mouth and nostrils, while a twinkle of livid flame darted out of either eye, proving indubitably, that his heart was all of a red blaze. The impudent fiend! to deny the existence of Tophet, when he felt its fiery torches raging within his breast! I rushed to the side of the boat, intending to fling myself on shore. But the wheels, as they began their revolutions, threw a dash of spray over me, so cold—so deadly cold, with the chill that will never leave those waters, until Death be drowned in his own river, that with a shiver and a heartquake, I awoke. Thank Heaven, it was a Dream!

EXPLANATORY REMARKS.

In order that the inquiring reader may better understand the foregoing allegory, we append the following *explanatory* remarks:

1. *Its Object.* It was doubtless intended as a burlesque upon the lifeless and pharisaic worship of the orthodox churches at the present time. As such, it is at once the most ingenious and scathing rebuke of popular religion that we recollect ever to have seen.

2. *The author.* The writer was the late Nathaniel Hawthorne, a distinguished politician of our own country and time; and the article referred to originally appeared in the *Democratic Review*, a quarterly published at Washington, D. C. In the present edition we have made some additions, which will the better make it conform to the theological manners of the times.

3. *Our design in publishing it.* This is to show the deplorably fallen condition of the nominal churches, and to deter all we can from expecting that a seat in the car of *Popular Profession* will finally convey them to the blessed abodes of the saved. And here we will remark that in our estimation the prevailing religion of the land is to a great extent mere form and show, with but little of the vitalizing effects of heavenly life about it. Pride, covetousness, and worldly-mindedness, are the order of the day, while sins of the blackest hue are merely connived at, or in many cases left wholly unrebuked. As *Cotton Mather* a few centuries since wrote, that just before the second coming of Christ "the church would become like a rotten, putrid carcass," the condition of things at present fully verifies his strong statement.

And to our minds nothing is more apparent than that the warning of the heavenly messenger in Rev. xiv, 8, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication," applies to the popular churches of the land. Babylon means

"confusion," and where shall we look for confusion, if not among the six hundred religious persuasions of our country—all holding conflicting sentiments, and having no more union for one another than the different political parties. It is as the prophet testifies, Isa. lvi, 10, "His watchmen are blind: they are ALL ignorant, they are ALL dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber." And another, Jer. v, 30, 31, "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" And still again it is recorded, Isa. lix, 14, 15, "Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey."

If we turn to the New Testament for a delineation of popular Christianity in the "last days," the result is heart-sickening. Says Paul, who wrote by revelation, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men (Wakefield's translation says, "CHRISTIANS") shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false-accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Tim. iii, 1–5. Here is a list of eighteen sins which the spirit of prophecy fastens on the popular church. Mark! it is *not* the world, but those who "have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." This agrees with the words of Christ himself, Luke xviii, 8, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" The argument by implication is, that there will be no faith. This is just as it was in the times of the flood, "when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." Moses in presenting the history of that dark period, says, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt: for ALL FLESH had corrupted his way upon the earth." Gen. vi, 5, 12. The Great Teacher himself draws the analogy between Noah's time and the last days. Says he in Luke xvii, 26, "As it was in the days of Noah, *so shall it be* in the days of the Son of man."

The statement of the flying angel in Rev. xiv, 8, is that Babylon (i. e., the confused, corrupted Christian bodies of the land, here taken as a whole, and given a name) "has made

all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication," and the cry is made by another heavenly witness, Rev. xviii, 4, "COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE!" God's people at the present time are scattered all through these corrupt ecclesiastical organizations, and it is just as essential for them to "come out" from them in order to receive the pentecostal influences of the Holy Spirit that they may stand in "the day of the Lord," as it was for ancient Israel to leave Egypt when God would work mightily for his people. We understand, also, by the "wine of her fornication," the various *false doctrines* which she presents to the kings and inhabitants of the earth, under the specious guise of truth. Of this the Saviour says, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Matt. xv, 13. Let the word of the Lord stand, if it tears in pieces every creed in Christendom! We will now specify what we believe, from Scripture, to be a few of the prominent errors of the churches, which are weekly promulgated from the pulpit and press as the truth of the living God.

1. *The corruption of the fourth commandment.* In this the pagan festival of Sunday has been instituted for the Rest-day of the Lord. The Bible plainly teaches that the ancient Sabbath is the authorized memorial of God's rest from his work of creation. But this has been changed to the first day of the week, to make it a memorial of our Lord's resurrection, in the place of baptism, which the church changed to sprinkling!

2. *The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul.* This was derived from pagan mythology, and introduced into the church by means of distinguished converts from paganism, some of whom became "fathers of the church." This doctrine, which has the Devil for its author, Gen. iii, 4, makes man's last foe, death, the gate to endless joy, and leaves the resurrection as a thing of minor importance. It is the foundation of modern Spiritualism.

3. *The eternal sufferings of the lost.* This is another doctrine which is diametrically opposed to the plainest statements of the Bible, and places the character of the great Jehovah in the most obnoxious light imaginable. As if a Being, whose very nature is love, would give life to innumerable creatures, whose everlasting portion he foresaw would be to writhe in fire and brimstone forever!

4. *The doctrine of a thousand years of peace and safety before the coming of Christ.* This doctrine will probably prove the ruin of as many souls as any heresy that ever cursed the church. Yet the Bible nowhere hints at the conversion of the world.

5. *The corruption of the ordinance of baptism.* Immersion is the only divinely-authorized memorial of our Saviour's burial and resurrection. This has been changed to sprinkling, or pouring, the fitting memorial of but one thing, viz., the folly and presumption of man.

6. *The doctrine of the saints' inheritance beyond the bounds of time and space.* For this famous fable multitudes have been swerved from the Scripture view of the everlasting kingdom in the New Earth, as plainly taught in the Bible.

7. *The trinitarian doctrine.* In consequence of this mysterious theological subtlety, the world has a very confused idea of God and the plan of salvation, and multitudes as the result openly impugn Christianity as a whole.

8. *The spiritual second advent.* It is well known that the great majority of commentators and religious teachers at the present time, openly advocate the view that Christ's second advent, as brought to view in Matt. xxiv, took place when Jerusalem was destroyed; and also that Christ comes when a person dies, or when sinners are converted, or when there is a great outpouring of the Spirit.

We will not further extend this list, which might be greatly protracted, but for *proof* against the above-named heresies we must refer the reader to our publication list.

Sincerely believing that statement of our Saviour, that "not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven," and hoping by these plain remarks to be instrumental in opening the "eyes of the blind," we subscribe ourselves the friends of all inquirers after the truth, and the companions of those "strangers and pilgrims" who are journeying toward that Celestial City, which "hath foundations" whose "builder and maker is God."

PUBLISHING COMMITTEE.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION.

Battle Creek, Mich.

Price $4 per hundred. Address Eld. James White.